

SILENCE IS NOT ALWAYS RIGHT

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Translation of an article entitled "Silence is not always right," in the German-language magazine Der Spiegel (Mirror), issue no. 3, Hamburg, 10 January 1966, pages 54-56, 59-60.

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Colonel Oleg V. Penkovskiy was the greatest spy who ever served the West in the Soviet Union. During the period 20 April 1961 through 21 October 1962, this Russian secret agent supplied the British Intelligence Agency M.I.6 and the American CIA with over 5,000 microfilm pictures, and information about the Kremlin, the Red General Staff and Soviet society. During his meetings with Western counter-intelligence officers his verbal reports were chiefly tape-recorded. Unlike any other spy before, Penkovskiy was supposed to have influenced world politics in that he informed Washington -- upon their urgent inquiry during the Cuban crisis in 1962 -- that the Soviet Nuclear Forces were not ready. His uncoded text, which he radioed to save time, unmasked him as a spy. He was arrested in October 1962, sentenced to death, and shot in May 1963. According to his wish, part of his tape-recordings and notes which were made for the Western Powers appeared as the "Penkovskiy Papers" two years later. The Kremlin reacted with rage: Stephen Rosenfeld, Moscow correspondent for the Washington Post which published the "Penkovskiy Papers", was expelled. Soviet diplomat Soldatov of the Russian Foreign Office also protested against their revelation in the London Observer. The printing of the "Penkovskiy Papers" in Spiegel caused an unusual reaction by the Kremlin in that the Soviet Secret Service appointed retired colonel Vladimir Apollonovitch Karpov to arrange an interview with the Moscow correspondent for Spiegel, Igor Vitsinos. It took place in the Moscow restaurant "Praga".

SPIEGEL: As you said on the telephone, you would like to prove that the Penkovskiy Papers -- published in the form of an extract -- are a forgery.

KARPOV: These so-called Penkovskiy Papers are a fraud and

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a dirty matter. Spiegel only serves the goals of the cold war with this type of publication. Obviously, Spiegel wants to thank Erhard, after the election, for the light treatment obtained in the Spiegel versus West German Government lawsuit.

SPIEGEL: You can rest assured we are under no obligation whatsoever, not even to Erhard. If you feel like giving us your viewpoint in connection with the publication of the Penkovskiy story, you may do it in the form of a reader's letter, or

KARPOV: Obviously, Spiegel publishes readers' letters in an abridged form!

SPIEGEL: or in the form of a Spiegel-interview. However, we follow certain proceedings, or let's say rules

KARPOV: Above all, I am guided by my law, that is our laws

SPIEGEL: We don't intend to overthrow your laws. We assume that all of us are interested in publishing your views. To avoid any misunderstanding and inaccuracy, our interview will be tape-recorded.

KARPOV: I see, you brought along a tape-recorder. Well, it is not customary in my department to have conversations taped. Even though I am a retired colonel, I am still under obligations.

SPIEGEL: During this interview would you, at least, agree to have your picture taken? Your head could be positioned in such a way that your features would not be recognized. All our stories are accompanied by pictures.

KARPOV: I do not think this will be necessary. Spiegel does not always carry illustrations.

SPIEGEL: The latest Spiegel edition is in front of you. Can you show us a single story without a picture?

KARPOV: I do not intend to prove to you my identity. But at the end of our conversation about Penkovskiy I will tell you something -- I am after all not completely unknown in the Federal Republic -- which will show you that I am authorized to talk about Penkovskiy.

SPIEGEL: Did you know Penkovskiy personally?

KARPOV: We both worked in the General Staff, and that is where I met him.

SPIEGEL: Why are Penkovskiy's Papers false?

KARPOV: Let's start in chronological order. Penkovskiy's last note, in the last chapter of the book, is dated 25 August 1962. At the Penkovskiy trial, as you probably know

SPIEGEL: We attended the trial.

KARPOV: then you know that Penkovskiy's last meeting with his Western contacts took place on September 6 (perhaps my memory fails me) or September 7. At this time Penkovskiy was under complete surveillance and was unable to deliver anything more. He was arrested on October 22.

SPIEGEL: You mean to say, therefore, that it was impossible for any note of August 25 to fall into Western hands.

KARPOV: Furthermore, Penkovskiy had received strict orders from four Western espionage agents not to write down anything, not even at home. I do not mention the deposition that Mrs. Penkovskiy made during an interview with an English newspaper, when she was asked whether or not her husband was in the habit of taking notes at home or could do so unobserved. Nevertheless, how could the Western espionage apparatus permit such an important agent to be placed in such danger, not to mention unnecessary danger. Do you believe that?

SPIEGEL: We published copies of the book because we believe our readers want to be informed. We also printed extracts of Alexander Werth's book "Russia during the War" for this reason, which you probably liked, but other readers did not like.

KARPOV: But in publishing these dirty falsifications, which you call the Penkovskiy Papers, you, a reputable magazine, serve the interests of the cold war.

SPIEGEL: When you talk about taking sides, we have to tell you that it came about because an innocent correspondent like Stephen Rosenfeld of the Washington Post was expelled because it published the Penkovskiy Papers. Even though you had closed the Spiegel office in Moscow, the second edition of this book would still have appeared.

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KARPOV: You realize that silence is not always right, because, as your saying has it, "silence means consent".

SPIEGEL: We do believe, Colonel, that the road you have chosen to take is better than expelling correspondents.

KARPOV: Thirdly, Penkovskiy turned over about 5,000 micro-film photos to the Anglo-American Secret Services. The courtroom data available showed that four-fifths of these pictures were originally published in magazines which, even though they could not be bought on the street but were meant for official use only, were neither marked "secret" nor "top secret", and the rest was made up of personal papers, identified papers, and family photos. This shows what Penkovskiy dealt with. Was there any need for the USA spy apparatus to have a spy in the General Staff who busied himself with such rubbish?

SPIEGEL: During the trial we wondered about some of Penkovskiy's espionage methods, such as breathing into a phone, or dead mail boxes in a vestibule. Even a novice would have found these methods unsuitable in the Soviet Union, not to mention a general staff officer.

KARPOV: I will talk about Penkovskiy in the General Staff a bit later. Fourthly, we have been wondering about the traitor Deriabin. Gibney, the publisher of the Penkovskiy Papers, maintains that Deriabin translated these papers. Deriabin spoke only Russian and did not know any foreign language. Now suddenly he is a translator. In reality, the so-called Penkovskiy Papers and the book published in 1959 by Gibney's publisher "Doubleday" -- I believe the English title is "Secret World" or something like that -- are obviously from one and the same hand and workshop.

SPIEGEL: Upon what do you base these assumptions?

KARPOV: Neither one nor the other book has the characteristics of a translation. They are elaborations of the CIA who handed them over to its press underling Gibney. If done by a master, a translation, except in belles-lettres, is known by its certain mode of expression. Russian translations are not recognizable by idiomatic language, but rather, I would say, through their style of thinking. Both books were written by Americans and are discernible by their typical slang. You will find nothing in them that is Russian, which even in good translations would glimmer through.

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SPIEGEL: You wanted to say something more about Penkovskiy in the General Staff.

KARPOV: As you can observe, all of Penkovskiy's identification papers which were published are dated 1961 at the latest. He was removed from the General Staff that year because of incompetence and dishonesty, in addition to instability.

SPIEGEL: At his trial, a witness appeared, who was supposed to or wanted to give evidence about the moral instability as you call it of Penkovskiy. However, this was hardly a convincing show. This witness had caroused with Penkovskiy and had borrowed money from him which he condescended to pay back just before the trial.

KARPOV: What you say hardly makes sense. Only a boon companion can testify about his crony.

SPIEGEL: How is it possible that a dishonest and morally unstable man was able to hold a leading position in the Coordination Committee of Scientific Research in your country?

KARPOV: Penkovskiy was a deputy representative of the Foreign Department, which, in my opinion, is not a very high position. For him it was just a position of probation.

SPIEGEL: And what did his dishonesty while serving the General Staff consist of?

KARPOV: Dishonesty is too broad a concept. We are not dealing here with criminal dishonesty such as theft. Let's suppose an agent pretends to have received information which actually does not exist. This too you may call dishonesty. It amounted to the same thing when Penkovskiy posed as a General Staff officer to the Americans. The Americans simply fell into the hands of a swindler. Penkovskiy was a sneak and tattletale. He never came close to being related to General Penkovskiy, as was maintained in the book.

SPIEGEL: Yet Penkovskiy sat in the General Staff.

KARPOV: His reports originated at the time when he was no longer in the General Staff and no longer had access to any information. And even when he was in the General Staff, he had no access to any material, which you call

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in German "Secret Command Matters". As a matter of fact, he was a researcher who had no insight into questions of strategy or planning, and to top it off he was a swindler in dealing with the Americans.

SPIEGEL: Do you mean to say that the published material was taken out of thin air, and is not worth anything?

KARPOV: You are comparing Penkovskiy with Redl or Sorge. I do not want to talk about Redl -- this matter is too "warm" for me (Redl was a homosexual-editor). Sorge became famous due to the book about him written by MacArthur's General Staff Chief in Japan. When they exchanged Powers for Colonel Abel it was said in the West that they had exchanged an artist for an artisan or something like that. Penkovskiy created his apparent important information, as I mentioned earlier, from printed matters for official use and from academic lectures.

SPIEGEL: What is the reason, as you see it, for publishing the Penkovskiy Papers at this particular time?

KARPOV: Well, this book was published with an eye on the word situation as of 1965. For instance, the book mentions chemical weapons of the Soviet Union, as if nothing was to be said about atomic and bacteriological weapons. But the Americans had to overcome difficulties with their Allies when they used chemical weapons in Vietnam. Therefore, it is all the more strange that only chemical weapons were mentioned in the book. According to this book the Soviet Union looks upon India and Pakistan as its quasi territory. In reality the quarrel there is a continuation of old colonial politics, but it is of pressing importance at the present time to put such assertions in Penkovskiy's mouth.

SPIEGEL: Do you have more points to raise?

KARPOV: Equally defamatory are the statements made in the book concerning our relations with other socialist countries. That is one of the common miscalculations to split us. Even this is of pressing importance at the present time. Some statements border on spiritualism. In 1961 or 1962 Penkovskiy already knew the reasons for Khrushchev's ouster, namely, at his own wish and for reasons of health. They put in the mouth of the dead Penkovskiy something that did not occur before 1964.

SPIEGEL: It struck us all strange that when Penkovskiy

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wrote "The Expression please God" he wrote the word "God" in capital letters in one of his handwritten notes. (Spiegel 50/1965, page 128. - editor.)

KARPOV: Absolutely right. Only a very believing, old person would have written "God" this way. Penkovskiy was anything but a believer; he was a cynic. But these so-called Penkovskiy Papers, these falsifications, swarm with even more obvious mistakes. According to Penkovskiy the restaurant "Baku" is situated in Moscow's Neglinnaja Street. Penkovskiy knew exactly where this restaurant is located -- near his committee office -- there many committee colleagues ate their lunch*. But this is not the only thing.

* The restaurant is located on Gorki Street (Spiegel - editor).

SPIEGEL: You don't say!

KARPOV: According to the book the Central Military Hospital is located at the Moscow sea shore called "Serebrjany Box". How long have you been in Moscow?

SPIEGEL: Six years with interruptions.

KARPOV: Then certainly you went there to swim. Did you see the hospital there?

SPIEGEL: We did not look for the hospital, we are not interested in military installations. By the way, where is it located?

KARPOV: I will not tell you where it is. It has also something to do with "Serebro" (Silver).

SPIEGEL: Are there more mistakes of this sort?

KARPOV: Some of them are plainly anecdotal. According to the book, Lt. General Rogov's son had difficulties in getting ahead because he had had contact with Anglo-American pilots during the war. At the end of the war the son of General Rogov was three years old and still went -- excuse my expression -- to the potty.

SPIEGEL: You mean to tell me that all of Penkovskiy's information was untrue? For instance, how about the story about Marshal Nedjelin?

KARPOV: I will not go into detail here. You have been long enough in Moscow to know that one does not utilize a spy for this sort of thing. It was enough merely to attend the funeral procession. And the story about Furzeva lies -- as you say in German -- simply below the waistline. I have nothing to add to this dirt. This is not espionage, but a mosaic made up of rumors and old correspondent stories, of which you yourself are best aware.

SPIEGEL: How do you evaluate Penkovsky's statements about strategic planning?

KARPOV: The book discusses strategy like my mother-in-law would. What was said about Soviet forces in the DDR -- you will soon see that I know something about this subject -- is far removed from these defense plans of the Warsaw Pact. It is exactly what you call in German "beer-table strategy." It is just as much nonsense to maintain that the Soviet rockets fly only a distance of 4,500 miles, when one knows from newspaper reports that when our rockets were tested in the Pacific Ocean they had a range of 7,500 miles (12,000 kilometers -- editor). Honestly, no one will believe that President Kennedy based his handling of the Cuban crisis upon such information.

SPIEGEL: Can we now proceed to the other set of questions? We mean the one you indicated you would discuss at the beginning of our interview.

KARPOV: To conclude, let me mention a typical inaccuracy which clearly proves to us that the Penkovskiy Papers are a forgery.

SPIEGEL: As you wish, we do like you to come to the point.

KARPOV: No. Something different. In the book Lt. General Konovalov is mentioned with complete name -- Alexey Andreyevitch; but his patronymic is Andrianovitch. For foreign ears this might sound unimportant. But you know that we address ourselves with first and father's name, and it is completely impossible for a Russian to make a mistake here.

SPIEGEL: You said that you are not an unknown person in our country. Are you willing to talk about it now?

KARPOV: I am known by the organization, which you know as BND /Bundesnachrichtendienst - Federal Intelligence Service/ and as General Gehlen.

SPIEGEL: In which connection?

KARPOV: In 1955 General Gehlen made contact with the staff of Soviet forces in the DDR.

SPIEGEL: Was that following Adenauer's negotiations with Moscow?

KARPOV: Afterwards. In the fall of 1956 -- I believe it was August or September -- I, as staff officer, was appointed by the Supreme Command of Soviet Forces in the DDR, to negotiate with the personal representative of General Gehlen. He was a colonel.

SPIEGEL: Can you tell us his name?

KARPOV: All I will tell you is that he is a retired army colonel. Respect for this man and human decency prevent me from mentioning his name. We regard him as an honest and brave patriot and nationalist. He was placed in a concentration camp in South Germany in 1944. There, by the way, he was with Canaris. He had difficulties after the war -- as I understand it -- because he was not in agreement with some of the problems concerning NATO.

SPIEGEL: With Adenauer?

KARPOV: Yes, yes, I believe it was something along these lines.

SPIEGEL: From your statement it won't be hard for us to identify this colonel**

** Spiegel identified this colonel as retired Colonel Bogislaw von Bonin. 57. During the war von Bonin was known as one of the most gifted General Staff officers. At the age of 38 he was appointed in 1944 Chief of a Tactical Division of the Supreme Command of the Army, where General Gehlen was commander of the division called "Foreign Troops East". Von Bonin was put in a concentration camp in 1945 because he ordered the evacuation of Warsaw against Hitler's wishes. In 1952 he took over the Planning Division of Amt Blank. He had some differences with his superiors Blank and General Heusinger, whose defense plans he called unrealistic. Bonin was forced to retire in 1955, but a few years later he was proved to be right. Blank's successor Strauss changed the time-plan for German rearmament. Today Bonin works for the Daimler-Benz plant in Hannover. Furthermore, he publishes a letter of

information called "United Germany", in which he proposes reunion and neutrality.

KARPOV: That is your business. I don't consider the name at all important.

SPIEGEL: We do not intend to cause you embarrassment. However, we would like to ask you what you talked about.

KARPOV: A short time before the colonel had been in the United States of America and had discussed these questions in detail which he obviously wanted to take up with us also. At that time he was convinced that the subject of unification was of little interest to the USA.

SPIEGEL: Did he talk about this matter with you?

KARPOV: The colonel carried a pencil-written outline with him, a sort of rough copy of negotiations. This one here.

SPIEGEL: Is this the handwriting of the colonel?

KARPOV: I do not know whether or not he wrote this himself.

SPIEGEL: May we read it?

KARPOV: Please copy it.

SPIEGEL: It consists of five onion skin pages paper, size DIN A 5, written in block letters. What does the note on the last page mean: -- "Exclusion of K.P". Does K. stand for Communism?

KARPOV: No. K. is a name. The colonel had an escort -- security officer -- whom he did not want with him at the meetings. K. drove around in the city and called for the colonel at the end of the negotiations.

SPIEGEL: Security officer? Why?

KARPOV: Once on a return flight the colonel was arrested at the airport of Duesseldorf, but only for half an hour. Gehlen phoned mister or Colonel Radke of the State Security Office who took measures to free my discussion partner. That's the way Colonel Gehlen described it.

SPIEGEL: So there were at least two meetings?

KARPOV: Yes, broken down into various segments.

SPIEGEL: Where did these talks take place?

KARPOV: In Berlin-Karlshorst on Ohm-Krueger Street. The colonel was met by my adjutant, Captain Volkov.

SPIEGEL: How did the talks go?

KARPOV: You might say in the General Staff style. Your colonel represented his views uprightly and to the point. He spoke honestly.

SPIEGEL: What about?

KARPOV: The colonel said that General Gehlen is for easing of tensions and normalization of relations between the Federal Republic and the Soviet Union. I said that on this subject, the general had to take the first step. He could use his influence effectively to the end that such organizations in Berlin as the combat groups and the so-called free lawyers stop their activities. You must understand, every state has its secret service, which is normal. However, the aforementioned organizations only poison the atmosphere and international relations.

SPIEGEL: Was the object of your talk "the function of the peoples parties"? We read this here from the notes.

KARPOV: Yes. We talked about what you call in your language "fractional parties". The colonel asked whether or not there was one amongst these parties which we could, or would, rely upon in case of a reunion.

SPIEGEL: What was your opinion?

KARPOV: We decided in the negative. It seemed to us that only the SPD [Sozialistische Partei Deutschlands, German Socialist Party] had the basic democratic power, but we perceived that it was too weak

SPIEGEL: and even today is too weak.

KARPOV: I do not care to get mixed up in your opinions. But if the economical climate does not change, one can expect no other change. We are certain of this. Because I know your satiated narrow-minded middle-class. The colonel suggested we establish contact between the SPD

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and our side. We rejected this proposal.

SPIEGEL: For what reason?

KARPOV: It was our opinion that a noble Prussian officer was not the requisite mediator for us.

SPIEGEL: We read here in the notes -- which you handed to us as a rough copy of negotiations carried on with your German discussion partner -- the following captions: "German question: Ways to reunion and restoration of possible direct negotiations between Federal Republic and Soviet Union. Neutral Europe belt. United Germany to Oder-Neisse, guaranteed by East and West. National military forces. "No SED or KPD system." It sounds like the famous Stalin note of March 1952.

KARPOV: The colonel received an appropriate answer to these questions reflecting the Soviet Union's point of view.

SPIEGEL: We can see that you do not want to say any more. But perhaps you are willing to give us some details on the topics appearing in these rough notes, such as: "Unity between the USA and Soviet Union; on status. No chance between Adenauer's and Grotewohl's governments. The case of the USSR: Away with Grotewohl, proxy compromise. If these prerequisites are met, direct negotiations with Federal Republic and DDR. Role of the SPD: support trade-unions.

KARPOV: I would like to stress that we rejected all proposals pertaining to the DDR. The DDR is a sovereign state -- you may not like this -- but we believe that the DDR will be the future Germany. There was also an exchange of correspondence. The colonel did not come any more after 1957.

SPIEGEL: Colonel, we thank you for this discussion.

- END -

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SUPPLEMENT

"TO COMPLETE THE PICTURE OF THE PROCEEDINGS"

Point of view of an individual familiar with operations of Secret Service organizations in Europe.

Not without wonder we learn that the Soviet Secret Service came out in the open against its carefully-laid principles of remaining behind protective screens of conspiracy and authorized a retired colonel to grant an interview with Spiegel on the subject of the authenticity of the "Penkovskiy Papers."

Of even greater interest for us Germans was Colonel Karpov's recollection of a contact made by himself at a time when he was a staff officer in the General Staff of the Soviet Forces in East Germany. This recollection may have been an opportunity for him to give a false report to Spiegel. This supposed contact was with the President of the BND, General Gehlen, in 1956 and then was broken off, in 1957. Hindsight tells us that much is important today, which at the time did not appear so, and vice versa. Even Colonel Karpov's oral reminiscences did not escape this pitfall, insofar as they may be said to complete in some way the proceedings.

The initiative in setting up the meeting between the unnamed noble Colonel and officers of the Soviet Supreme Command in Karlshorst was not done by General Gehlen, but rather by these officers themselves, who at the end of 1955 invited the German colonel, through a middleman in Karlshorst, to attend a meeting of their organization called "United German Soldiers Discussion Group". They let the Colonel know that they would reimburse him for all costs in connection with this trip. This colonel, who at no time was connected with Gehlen's Group (BND), took advantage of this invitation and assumed that it might be a way to solve the German reunification problem. The colonel attended this meeting in a typical noble, Prussian officer style and shortly thereafter referred to it as his "Hussar-Ride".

He was nevertheless not a little disappointed that he was unable to air his views to the Chief of the Soviet Forces, General Tarassov, but at the same time he was told in no uncertain terms by one of the Soviet officers at the

meeting to support the German-Soviet agreement, which the colonel angrily refused to do. Not until his return from this trip to East-Berlin did the colonel referred to by Karpov relate his experiences to the president of the BND, whom he knew personally from former times, and not until he almost a year later had made his second and last trip to East-Berlin, where he met Colonel Karpov and talked with him about his own political views, about which Karpov now reports in the interview.

As far as the subject matter of the talks between Colonel Karpov and this former colonel is concerned, no one will be surprised to note that Karpov's statements shove into the foreground in a one-sided manner, that which he feels to be important, especially today, and that he forms his points of view somewhat violently which his German discussion partner at the time proposed to him.

When Colonel Karpov explains:

"On this matter the colonel received an appropriate answer corresponding to the Soviet Union's point of view, and

"I would like to stress that we rejected all proposals pertaining to the DDR. The DDR is a sovereign state, and you may not like this, but we believe that the DDR will be the future Germany."

We can clearly see proof of the incompatibility of such points of view and proof of the fact that the repeatedly-mentioned opportunities for a solution to the German problem of reunification did not really exist at all during the period 1955-1957.